UNCLAS KHARTOUM 001648

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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV MOPS KPKO SU
SUBJECT: REPORTS OF SKIRMISHES AROUND KORMA

REF: A) Khartoum 1637; B) Khartoum 1625; C) Khartoum 1572

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Media reporting appears to have combined two
separate and unconfirmed incidents of fighting, mixing a significant
element of speculation in an active campaign to discredit
SLM/A-Minni Minawi forces. Fighting reportedly broke out between
SLM/A- Abdel Wahid and SLM-Minawi forces south of Korma June 30 to
July 5, and between SLM/A-Minawi and G-19 forces north of Kutum in
the vicinity of Birmaza and Um Sidir on July 9. Neither UNDSS nor
AMIS has been able to confirm the accuracy of any of the reports.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) According to the UNDSS Regional Security Officer (RSO), who
has completed a preliminary investigation of fighting south of
Korma, SLM/A-Wahid forces appear to have attacked several Zaghawa
villages 40 km south of Tawila on June 30 and stole 400 head of
livestock (reftels A and B). Local SLM/A-Minawi forces retaliated
the next day, attacking three villages (Dadi, Kiera, and Tungar) and
retrieving their livestock plus some extra. During his
investigation, UNDSS RSO found three grave sites in Dadi with a
reported seven bodies and one grave site with three bodies in Kiera.
 His investigation indicated that there was limited fighting based
on physical evidence such as shell casings and blood trails. He
also stated that representatives from both belligerents admitted to
the fighting and the sequence of events. SLM/A-Wahid forces
indicated they have since withdrawn all of their forces to the south
on the outskirts of East Jebel Marra. However, there are still
reports of sporadic gunfire and small bands of SLM/A-Minawi fighters
in the vicinity of the three villages as well as on the outskirts of
Korma. This fighting is the most likely cause of the increased IDP
flow to the Zam Zam IDP camp, reportedly ranging from 1000 to 3000
new IDPs. There were no reports of SAF or janjaweed elements
involved in the fighting.

¶3. (SBU) Meanwhile, skirmishing allegedly instigated by SLM/A-Minawi
forces in UM Sidir and Baashim/Tina against G-19 forces north of
Korma broke out July 9. The G-19 forces reportedly included
elements of the National Redemption Front (NRF) attack on Hamrat al
Sheik in Kordafan on July 3 (reftel C). On July 10, SLM/A-Minawi
forces attacked the main body of NRF/G-19 forces on the outskirts of
Birmaza. G-19 Commander Adam Ali Shogar reported the attack to
UNDSS and claimed there was a white helicopter with AMIS stenciled
on the bottom of the aircraft flying over the battle and landing in
the rear of the SLM-M forces. He also stated that there was a white
Antonov aircraft circling above the fighting. There was no report
of close air support or any hostile actions by either aircraft. The
fighting continued through the afternoon, but by July 11
SLM/A-Minawi forces had either reportedly withdrawn or were driven
out of Birmaza. The G-19 Commander Shogar claimed 8 of his forces
KIA, 9 WIA, and 24 civilians killed. There is no independent
verification of these figures. An SLM/A-Minawi commander confirmed
that an Antonov aircraft was in the vicinity of the fighting.

¶4. (SBU) The UNDSS RSO reported that G-19 Commander Shogar

originally made no claims of janjaweed involvement in the July 9-10 attack. However, following a similar claim made from Europe by recently dismissed SLM spokesman Esam Edin El-Haj, Shogar has since stated that his force had been attacked by janjaweed forces. The UNDSS RSO felt that this later claim was part of an active campaign to discredit Minawi and his forces by elements of the non-signatories. He planned to return to the vicinity of Korma on July 12 to complete his investigation of the first incident and begin an investigation of the fighting further north.

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